

Message Text

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41

ACTION ARA-20

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SUBJ: PANAMANIAN BISHOPS ISSUE DECLARATION

SUMMARY: PANAMA'S BISHOPS HAVE ISSUED DECLARATION CONDEMNING "EXTREME ALTERNATIVES" OF LIBERAL CAPITALISM AND MARXISM, WHICH THEY SEE BEING ADVOCATED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN PANAMA BY OPPOSING FORCES AND JEOPARDIZING INTERNAL PEACE AND SECURITY. DECLARATION, HOWEVER, IS OBVIOUSLY AIMED MORE DIRECTLY AT COMMUNISTS. IT WAS PUBLISHED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AUGUST 3 AND 4 AND WILL BE READ FROM ALL PULPITS IN PANAMA SUNDAY AUGUST 5.

1. DECLARATION IS REPORTEDLY RESULT OF 3 MONTHS STUDY OF SITUATION IN PANAMA, BUT IT WAS ACCELERATED BY EVENTS IN CHIRIQUI PROVINCE. DISCUSSING "EXTREME ALTERNATIVES" THE BISHOPS SAID: "WHILE CERTAIN GOVERNMENT SECTORS PROPITIATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERAL CAPITALIST TYPE, THE BENEFITS OF WHICH DO NOT REACH UNDERPRIVILEGED CLASSES, THE OTHER SECTORS AND POLITICAL GROUPS.. ARE ENGAGED IN TASK OF IMPOSING MARXIST-COMMUNIST IDEOLOGIES, ATTITUDES AND SOLUTIONS, ESPECIALLY AMONG STUDENTS, WORKERS AND PEASANTS, TO THE DETRIMENT OF POSITIVE VALUES OF OUR CULTURE AND RIGHTS OF MANY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS."

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2. IN CRITICIZING CAPITALISM, BISHOPS POINTED OUT THAT "PRESENT

GREAT ECONOMIC PROGRESS" DOES NOT BENEFIT ALL AND IT HAS MADE MORE ACUTE "THE DISPARITY BETWEEN RICH AND POOR AND BETWEEN CAPITAL CITY AND REST OF COUNTRY." THIS SHOULD BE ELIMINATED THROUGH FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND THROUGH "SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGES, INCLUDING RADICAL CHANGES."

3. MARXISM, HOWEVER, GOT STRONGER CRITICISM. BISHOPS REFERRED TO RECENT "CONGRESS FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND PEACE" AND YOUTH FESTIVAL IN DAVID, DESCRIBING BOTH EVENTS AS SUPPORTED BY MARXISTS AND GOP. THE DENOUNCED THE SENDING OF LARGE OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS TO COMMUNIST CONGRESSES AND EVENTS ABROAD (EAST BERLIN WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL AND CUBAN 26TH JULY CELEBRATION). THEY POINTED OUT THAT MARXIST STUDENT LEADERS, WITH OFFICIAL SUPPORT, HAVE CARRIED OUT MEETINGS IN SOME GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS AT WHICH ATTENDANCE WAS COMPULSORY. MOREOVER THESE STUDENT LEADERS HAVE PROMOTED CELEBRATION OF EVENTS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY WHICH ARE FOREIGN TO "OUR CONDITION AS A FREE AND SOVEREIGN PEOPLE."

4. DECLARATION CONTRASTED FREEDOM OF ACTION AND EXPRESSION ENJOYED BY MARXIST GROUPS WITH "SERIOUS AND LAMENTABLE LIMITATIONS ON OTHER GROUPS.."AND CONDEMNED ATTEMPTS BY ANY GROUP "TO UNILATERALLY IMPOSE ITS IDEOLOGIES AND PROGRAMS, IGNORING THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS" AND CALLED UPON "HIGH AUTHORITIES OF GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT RIGHTS OF ALL CITIZENS."

5. COMMENT: DECLARATION ECHOS TORRIJOS' STATEMENT JULY 27 THAT HE WOULD NOT LET PANAMA'S REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT BE DEVIATED "TOWARDS ANY OF THE POWER CAPITALS OF THE WORLD." WHILE IT CRITICIZES BOTH EXTREMES, ITS MAIN THRUST WAS AGAINST MARXISM. TORRIJOS' ACTION IN OUSTING LEFTIST PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN CHIRQUI APPEARS TO BE GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS, SUCH AS THE BISHOPS, TO VOICE THEIR CONCERN REGARDING LEFTIST ACTIVITIES IN PANAMA.
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